

INFORMATION REPORT INFORMATION REPORT

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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COUNTRY . USSR

REPORT

SUBJECT Poti/Port Information

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REFERENCES

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DATE OF INFO.

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PLACE & DATE ACQ.

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The Office of Naval Intelligence furnished the following information to CIA for USIB dissemination

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2. Approaches.

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Approximately 20 miles offshore from Poti, USSR, two small patrol craft approached and circled vessel. The patrol craft used blinker signals to demand the vessel identify herself. After vessel complied with the request, the patrol craft departed. vessel proceeded toward Poti, USSR, and one-half mile offshore have to for one-half hour and awaited a pilot.

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- b. A pilot boarded the vessel accompanied by other officials who examined the ship's papers, mustered the ship's crew and issued shore passes. The vessel was not searched by the officials. six navigation buoys, three on each side of the channel, leading to the north breakwater and outer harbor of the port.

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Three tugs, two large and one small, met the vessel in the harbor and assisted in berthing the vessel.

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the water depth directly alongside the pier was no more than 24 to 25 feet. the bottom was composed of mud and silt. After unloading for two days and reaching a draft of 24 feet the vessel was moved alongside the pier. The pier was 600 feet to 700 feet long, constructed of concrete. A large warehouse about 500 feet long was located on the pier. Custom offices were located on each end of the pier. The Custom office located on the west end of the pier was three stories tall, topped with large search lights and radio antennas. It appeared that custom officials lived in part of this building. At the east or shore end of this pier a small one-story custom house was located where officials checked the shore passes of crew members. railroad tracks were located on each side of the warehouse, running the full length of the pier. These railroad tracks merged with numerous other railroad tracks just east of the pier forming a railroad yard. There were no cranes located on the middle mole.

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4. Cargo Handling.

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no crane facilities were available on this mole and the cargo was handled by the vessel's machinery and winches.

the longshore gang was short handed, especially of signalmen, to efficiently handle the cargo in a reasonable length of time. Because of mishandling by the longshoremen, boxes of the cargo were frequently damaged in unloading. The cargo was moved directly into the warehouse.

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5. Mechanical Equipment.

no cranes of any type on the middle mole. Several railroad cars and engines were occasionally shunted onto the middle mole. On the south side of the north mole, north side of the inner basin, east side of the inner basin, and the south side of the inner basin railroad tracks were located. In this entire area, coal was being unloaded from ships by use of gooseneck cranes onto railroad cars. at least 20 to 30 gooseneck cranes were located in this area.

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6. Logistics. potable water was supplied from a small vessel of approximately 100 tons.

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The warehouse on the middle mole was illuminated by electric lights at night, and an electric light from the wharf was used to light the hold during unloading operations at night.

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his vessel did not take any provisions or fuel aboard while in Poti, USSR.

7. Ships Present.

a. During the time vessel was in Poti, USSR, a large Russian passenger ship was berthed on the north side of the middle mole (see #2 as marked on reference (b)). Eight merchant marine vessels were berthed in the north harbor and the inner basin. Three of the merchant vessels were berthed on the south side of the north mole, three on the north side of the inner basin, and two on the south side of the inner basin (see #3 as marked on reference (b)).

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there were vessels among the merchant vessels.

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did not see any USSR or satellite country merchant vessels other than noted above in Poti, USSR. a USSR naval patrol vessel of approximately 500 tons moored to the south mole (see #4 as marked on reference (b)).

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Three small naval harbor craft were moored alongside the larger patrol vessel.

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- b. [] did not see any submarines, submarine supply vessels, or shore facilities for handling submarines in the harbor.

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8. Controls and Port Security.

- a. As stated previously, [] the pilot was accompanied by other officials when [] vessel was boarded just outside the harbor of Poti, USSR. The officials wore civilian clothing and [] did not see any military or naval uniforms in either the port or urban areas. [] there were "police" present on the piers, but [] they wore work clothing and not uniforms. Their presence was obvious [] because they lounged on the pier without working while the stevedore gang was shorthanded. [] that no restrictions were placed on crew members going ashore. When crew members left the ship they were checked by custom officials at the shore end of the pier, surrendered one-half of their pass and proceeded ashore.

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[] area was flat land with very few buildings.

- b. Restrictions were placed on use of the vessel's radio equipment and she was not allowed to transmit messages while in port. [] use shore radio facilities to send messages, if necessary. No restrictions were placed on travel for the crew members. They were allowed to take liberty in the city until 2300 hours.

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[] "police" wore civilian clothing, followed at a discreet distance, and did not attempt to interfere with the movements of source.

- c. [] powerful searchlights were mounted upon towers at the offshore end of the pier on the middle mole, north mole and north breakwater. The port authorities turned the searchlights on intermittently, and periodically during each night [] in port. [] impressed with the illuminating capabilities of the lights, and [] that they lighted the entire harbor when turned on. [] all the searchlights were turned on when his vessel left the harbor during the night of 20 Dec 59. One of the small harbor craft escorted [] vessel out of the harbor. [] radio antennas located on the towers where the searchlights were mounted.

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10. General.

- a. [] impressed with a change in the attitude of the port officials. Prior to WWII, [] numerous military personnel in the port and [] the security regulations and restrictions were much more confining and limiting than those encountered during this visit. [] did not notice any military uniformed personnel in Poti, USSR. [] last December. [] the officials and "police" wore civilian clothing, [] their appearance as "poor", implying that they did not appear very prosperous.

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b.

a bar located just across the Rion River bridge in the city of Poti, USSR. This bar served warm beer and weak warm no hard liquor was available.

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c.

one night searchlights illuminating the sky about two or three miles inland. The searchlight activity was followed by the observation of a muzzle flash of a large gun followed by a booming sound, indicating one round had been fired from a heavy weapon. There was no anti-aircraft fire accompanying this exercise.

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